

## **Stand Alone Compliance Guide**

Most likely your college already invites minors to campus for a variety of programs including sports camps, prospective student visits, daycares, and as patients, interns, or participants in after-school programming. As a result, your school should have a “protection of minors (POM)” policy that will dictate your basic responsibilities to your students. Your first step towards making your program compliant with university policies may be to register your program with your university, probably through the HR or compliance department. You should also speak with your campus Department of Public Safety, who may have additional suggestions or requirements, especially for residential programs. We recommend finding someone within those departments who can walk you through the requirements specific to your state and university. Below we have outlined some common requirements based on procedures from a variety of colleges and universities, as well as standards from the American Camping Association (ACA).

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## **I. Staffing**

### **A. Background Checks**

- Your school's POM policy will almost certainly require staff background checks every one to three years, likely coordinated through HR. You can expect that your staff will need to submit an authorization form that will ask for personal information including their social security number, date of birth, and residential history. Many schools will only require criminal history and sex offender registry checks every few years, and will not require fingerprinting. The ACA recommends yearly background checks for seasonal staff ([see the ACA guidelines here](#)). Background checks vary in cost and time based on the individual's residential history. At Columbia's Freedom & Citizenship program, for example, the university uses an external organization to conduct the checks. In 2019, background checks took between one and five business days to clear, and cost between \$9.15 and \$227.90 per person. You should retain some documentation that your staff has cleared background checks.

### **B. Protection of Minors Training**

- Most schools also offer some form of training for Protection of Minors (POM), possibly as a webinar that staff may complete online and in their own time. POM training is typically geared towards preventing, recognizing, and reporting child abuse only. The POM training should clarify your staff's reporting responsibilities if they suspect a minor is being abused. While you are not likely to be [mandatory reporters](#) by state law, your university may require mandatory reporting regardless. You should retain documentation that your staff has conducted and completed the required POM training.

### **C. Supervision**

- Your school's POM policy may dictate a staff-to-student ratio for minors on campus. For students aged 15-17, the American Camping Association

recommends a 1:12 supervising ratio during the day and 1:10 at night. Your state laws or university policies may differ. Housing, dining halls, public safety, and HR/compliance may have different answers to the following questions, so be sure to get clarity on what is required as opposed to what is recommended. Students should be accounted for at all times, but there are many different ways of ensuring that your staff know where all the students are.

- Additionally, your school may have guidelines on supervising and working with students in sensitive situations, such as how to supervise minors in locker rooms or bathrooms, how to have (or avoid) 1:1 meetings with minors, and what restrictions or guidelines staff should have when interacting with students when not in person, through email, video calls, phone calls, texting, and social media.

#### **D. Policies**

- These policies should be in writing for yourself and your program staff before staff training begins, and may be required by your compliance department.
  - a) Campus and student emergencies
  - b) Non-emergency medical attention
  - c) Consequences for students breaking program agreements

## **II. Documentation**

Typically programs request four types of documents from students and their guardians before beginning. Your school may have templates you should use. If not, we have included samples from various universities below each item. You might wait to collect these forms until the month or even day of your program's start, but you'll want to prepare these forms well in advance.

## **A. Waiver and Release of Liability**

- This document, signed by participants and their guardians, releases the university and the program from future claims against them. Some states outlaw releases and some courts will find them unenforceable (particularly in claims of negligence rather than inherent risk), but releases are a good idea even if they are not required. [As the ACA explains](#), a release is a “part of a larger agreement” and an opportunity to communicate with guardians and students what your program involves. You should retain a copy of the release for three years or until the minor turns 20, whichever is longer.
- A basic release will include:
  - a) A description of activities and where they will take place
  - b) A description of some of the risks including those that are inherent to the program activities
  - c) Acknowledgement from the guardian that some risks are inherent
  - d) An agreement by the guardian to release the university and program from claims arising from the student’s participation
- Sample university releases:
  - a) [Drexel University](#)
  - b) [Rutgers University](#) (including photo, medical, transit release and code of conduct)
  - c) [New York University](#)
  - d) [University of Colorado](#)
  - e) [Northeastern University](#)
  - f) [Yale University](#) (in Spanish)

## **B. Health Form**

- Your release form may include language about authorizing campus staff to attain emergency medical care for participants, as well as authorizing them to dispense prescription or non-prescription drugs. Regardless, we

recommend following the standards put forth by the American Camp Association.

- A health form that follows ACA standards should include the following:
  - a) Emergency contact information
  - b) Record of allergies and/or dietary restrictions
  - c) Record of current medications, both prescribed and over-the-counter
  - d) Record of past health treatment, if any
  - e) A statement from the custodial parent/guardian attesting that all immunizations required for school are up to date including the actual date (month/year) of last tetanus shot (a physician statement, a government immunization report, or a school immunization report is also acceptable).
  - f) Description of any current physical, mental, emotional, social health, developmental, or psychological conditions requiring medication, treatment, or special restrictions or considerations while at camp; and description of any camp activities the camper should be exempted from for health reasons
  - g) Medical insurance information
  - h) Authorization to treat
  - i) Signature from guardian
- Sample Health Forms:
  - a) [American Camp Association](#)
  - b) [Catholic University](#)
  - c) [New York University](#)
  - d) [Yale University](#) (in Spanish)
  - e) [Boston College](#)

### **C. Photo/Video Release**

- You will certainly want pictures of students in your program, including close-ups of minors in which they are identifiable, and that will require a photo and video release. Media releases may not be part of the standard protection of minors (POM) policy, but your university likely has an image policy that applies across the campus as well as a standard form. You might locate that policy and form in your school’s public relations or communications office. Make sure the form includes a line for the signature of the guardian of a minor participant.
- If your school does not have such a form, here are some school forms you might look to as a template:
  - a) [University of Richmond](#)
  - b) [University of Washington](#) (in 15 languages)
  - c) [Ithaca College](#)
  - d) [University of West Florida](#) (online submission)

### **D. Field Trip, Commuting, and Off Campus Permission Slips**

- You can include information about field trips, commuting, and off-campus time in your program waiver and release of responsibility or you can opt for separate documents. Again, this is a chance to communicate with parents and participants what the program will entail.
- A field trip permission slip should include:
  - a) Date, time, and location of the trip
  - b) Supervision structure
  - c) Method of transportation
  - d) Emergency contact information, authorization to treat (you should already have this in your health form, but including it in your permission slip means you will have it on hand when travelling together off campus)
- Sample commuting and permission slips:

- a) [Catholic University Commuter Agreement](#)
- b) [Auburn University](#) General Information and Transportation Form

#### **E. Program Agreement Form**

- Here you may lay out the rules for participation in your program. Some universities require a form that dictates appropriate behavior for minors on campus. For those that don't require such a form you may still want some documentation that outlines your expectations for student participation, like a "code of conduct."
- An agreement form might specify:
  - a) Drug, alcohol, weapons, illegal substances policy (specify whether this applies for prescription or OTC drugs)
  - b) Appropriate conduct with students, program staff, and others on campus
  - c) Where participants can and cannot go on (and off) campus
  - d) Electronic policy
  - e) Curfews
- Sample agreement forms:
  - a) [Yale University](#)
  - b) [Catholic University](#)
  - c) [University of Kansas](#)